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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
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SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS: PARLIAMENT PASSES NEW LAW AGAINST
TORTURE

¶1. This cable is sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

¶2. (U) On March 16, the GOM announced parliament's passage of a new law against torture, according to the English-language Morocco Times. The Minister of Justice, Mohammed Bouzoubaa, reportedly said, "The new law against torture is part of a judicial arsenal which reinforces the respect of human rights principles." While the penal code already sanctioned torture, the minister said the new law shows "no mercy towards torturers."

¶3. (U) According to the press account, the new law controls judicial police activities, provides medical expertise and lawyer assistance for people in custody. Bouzoubaa emphasized that the corruption in the judicial system would cease. He reportedly said, "a network of swindlers was composed within the justice administration."

¶4. (SBU) Comment: A new law against torture has long been promised, having been forecast by PM Jettou two years ago. The parliamentary passing of an anti-torture law is timely. The Department's recently published human rights reports identify incidents of probable torture, both in the Western Sahara and in detention facilities elsewhere in the country, as documented by Amnesty International. The law, along with the minister's statements, indicate that the GOM wants to be understood as fighting corruption, improving the judicial system and complying with human rights standards. We will track application of the new law and reaction within the human rights community and report as appropriate. End Comment.

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